JAN 30 1912

PROSSER SPECIAL EDITION

The Christian Socialist

The Golden Rule Against the Rule of Gold

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Ninth Year. No. 4 CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, THURSDAY, [illegible]ARY 25, 1912 3c Per Copy, $1.00 Per Year

The Philosophy of Socialism—An Outline Socialism A World Issue

By Rev. Wm. A. Prosser, Pastor Ames Methodist Episcopal Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Socialists have always contended, and do now contend, that Marxian Socialism is a world issue and the only real issue before humanity. All other issues are only palliatives or makeshifts advocated, consciously or unconsciously, to delay the crisis, hide the real issue, or to deceive the people. Until recently this was either contemptuously ignored, or vehemently denounced as a figment of a diseased brain. But now, forced by recent developments, it is universally conceded by intelligent persons of all political, economic and religious faiths to be a fact.

The Roman Catholic heirarchy have seen the "haunting spectre" and freely admit it; and with characteristic zeal and diplomacy, are attempting, by fair and foul means, to destroy it.

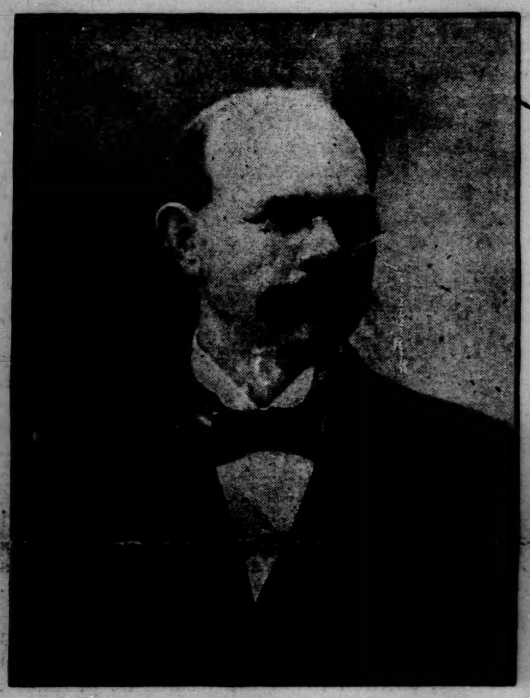
John Graham Brooks, special lecturer on economics in the University of California, recently said in a lecture to a Unitarian Ministerial Conference, "We are facing a crisis in the United States at this time as serious, or more serious, than the crisis before the Civil War. I am not going to prove that in this lecture. It will take me too far afield. But we are in the midst of a revolution. I do not mean it is coming; it is here. . . . There is only one thing that can save the country, and that is Socialism."

President William Taft has recently gone over the country calling attention to the fact that "our present conflict is between Socialism and Plutocracy," and that "there is no alternative before us except to go on to Socialism or back to regulated competition."

A World Movement

If Socialism is a world issue, it must be a world movement. It finds expression in local, national and international organization. It is an international movement of the workers of the world. Its bond of unity is community of interests, principles and objective. The worker, not of a given community or nation, but of the world, is a wage-slave. He is universally dependent upon the possessing class for an opportunity to live. He possesses in common nothing but his labor-power and this he must sell in a competitive, over-crowded labor market to any one who will buy it for whatever price is offered. His wage is no more than the profit system of production, on the one hand, and labor competition on the other, will give him. Hence his interests, the world over, are identical. Consequently the socialist movement must be a cosmopolitan, class-conscious and class-united movement in order to win the world; to over-turn the present world-wide capitalistic civilization and substitute therefor a universal co-operative commonwealth.

It is rather commonplace to say that the Socialist movement is growing; but it is a fact worthy of note. The movement is spreading wider, cutting deeper and becoming clearer as an issue with every passing day. It is now a tremendous power in the world's politics. It has penetrated every corner of this civilized globe and counts among its members and friends men and women of all colors, creeds and social conditions. Its recent growth has been truly phenomenal. It is conservatively estimated that the Socialist vote of the world, if counted now, approximates 20,000,000: and



Rev. Wm. A. Prosser

that the Socialist vote for President of the United States in 1912 will reach 2,000,000. The recent election in Allegheny county, a stronghold of capitalism, showed a Socialist vote of about 20,000, a gain of 100 per cent. There are now upwards of one thousand Socialist representatives holding various elective offices in our nation, from national, state and county down to city, town and township positions. Unless all signs fail, the future growth of the movement will be more rapid and sweeping than its immediate past. If present indications become prophesy fulfilled, Socialism will be in control of the most advanced capitalistic nations within the next 50 years, and of the whole world before the close of the present century.

The geographical spread and numerical growth of the Socialist movement is equalled only by its qualitative growth. The movement is growing in quality as well as quantity. It is enlisting in its ranks men and women from all walks of life. True Socialism, like early Christianity and every other revolutionary movement down the ages, took its rise among and stands for the dispossessed and oppressed classes, the proletariat. It still appeals to and stands for these classes, and its ultimate success depends largely upon them. But true to historical precedent, it did not and could not confine itself to them. It has risen and invaded the so-called middle classes and here and there touches the real upper class. This was inevitable and necessary as Karl Marx observed. The Socialist movement is not now made up wholly of the "mud-sills of society," the "down-and-outs," the "economic and political malcontents," but counts among its most devoted and loyal "comrades" thousands of business and professional men. These are manufacturers, merchants, lawyers, doctors, ministers, teachers, journalists, artists and poets; men and women who, out of moral as well as economic motives, have joined the movement in the confident belief that its triumph will mean the emancipation of all men from economic, moral and mental servitude. In the language of John Spargo, the biographer of Karl Marx, "the contribution of this element to the working-class movement is not a small matter, for it brings to the movement fresh elements of enlightenment and progress."

A World Benefactor

Among the last noted words of the lamented Miss Frances Willard were these: "Socialism is the bone and marrow of the Gospel of Christ. It is Christianity applied. It is God's way out of the wilderness into the Promised Land." Socialists, both before and since her day, firmly believe that the triumph of Socialism will carry with it the redemption of man and society. Its adoption will mean the abolition of poverty, slum-tenements, over-employment, under-employment and the tramp; the abatement of the white plague and other contagious and fatal diseases, the lessening of the accident and death rate and the removal of nine-tenths of the causes of crimes, corruption and graft; the absolute destruction of class interests, class distinctions, class struggles, domestic and foreign wars; the establishment of the universal commonwealth (Christ's Kingdom of God and His righteousness) and the granting to all an opportunity for the first time in history, to all who wish, to practice the letter and spirit of the ethical teachings of Jesus in our ecclesiastical, social, educational, commercial and political relations and activities. The adoption of Socialism as the world's social order will mean inestimable blessings for rich and poor, blessings no less for the idle rich than for the proletarian army, and the submerged millions; no less for the mistress than for the wash-woman. It will mean nothing less than the realization of the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of man, and a united, peaceful and prosperous world.

Socialism is either a threatening menace or a coming blessing; either the most terrible threat that ever arose like a frightful storm cloud, against civilization, or the most glorious promise that has ever shone, like a sunburst on mankind, since Jesus preached His Good-Tidings to the poor in Palestine. It is high time that the church, its ministry and laity, which is responsible to God for the right use of its influence and power, should diligently seek to learn which it is and to exert itself on that side. But he who would know whether it will be a social blessing or bane must first acquire a clear, definite and comprehensive conception of the fundamental principles in the philosophy of Socialism and the history, methods, practices and objective of the Socialist movement.

This philosophy of Socialism consists of four cardinal principles: Historical Materialism, Surplus Value, The Class Struggle and Collectivism. A few words on each point, in the order named, is all that can be attempted in this article.

Historical Materialism

This principle is variously named by different writers as the "Economic Interpretation of History," the "Materialistic Conception of History," "Economic Determinism" and "Historical Materialism." The last named phrase was the one most commonly used by Marx and Engels, the founders of Modern Scientific Socialism. Modern writers use them as interchangeable and synonymous expressions

The doctrine involved in the phrase is set forth in the now famous document known as the "Communist Manifesto," in the following words: "In every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organization necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch."

The principle formulated and expressed by these words means that the basic forces in social evolution, or historical development, are ontogenetic, material; that the first form of world-life is stomach, the first needs of a human being are material and the first law of life is self-preservation; **that the method by which a people seeks to satisfy its first wants conditions its higher life and shapes its religious, education, social, political, industrial and commercial institutions. It means that civilization in any given epoch, is no better and no worse than its economic system, and that to create a new and higher form of civilization, a more equitable form of gaining a livelihood must first be established.**

Guided by scientific research, modern scholarship has accepted this position. Prof. Seligman has said: "Taking man, however, for what he has thus far been and still is, it is difficult to deny that the underlying influence in its broadest aspects, has very generally been of this economic character. The economic interpretation of history, in its proper formulation, does not exhaust the possibilities of life and progress, but it emphasizes the forces which have hitherto been so largely instrumental in the rise and fall, in the prosperity and decadence, in the glory and failure, in the weal and woe of nations and peoples. . . . The starting point of all human activity is the existence of wants; to satisfy hunger and thirst, to secure shelter and to provide clothing were the chief aims of primitive man, and constitute even today the motor forces of society. However civilized he becomes, his material welfare forms the basis on which the whole larger life is erected."

Dr. Josiah Strong has added his testimony in the following words: "There cannot be a high intellectual and spiritual growth without an adequate physical basis. Man is the most perfect animal in the world. **It was the highest physical organism which received the double crown of intellectual and spiritual life.** In human experience the higher is conditioned by the lower, as the superstructure is limited by the foundation. . . . National religions, national ideals and national heroes have all had profound influence in shaping civilizations, but no one of these can compare with industry in constancy and universality of its operation or in the magnitude of its effects. It is through industry that man supplies his bodily wants, which, though no more real than intellectual and spiritual needs, are vastly more conscious and clamorous."

Prof. Lester F. Ward, probably one of the greatest sociologists now living, has written the following words in his book, "Pure Sociology:" "It is becoming more and more apparent that **the spiritual part of civilization is at least conditioned upon material civilization.** It does not derogate from its worth to admit that without a material basis it cannot exist. But it is also true that **the moment such a basis is supplied it comes forth in all ages and races of men.** It may therefore be regarded as innate in man and potential everywhere, but a flower so delicate that it can only bloom in the rich soil of material prosperity. **No amount of care devoted to it alone could make it flourish in the absence of suitable conditions, and with such conditions it requires no special attention."**

Even Mr. Theodore Roosevelt, in his last Thanksgiving Proclamation as President of the United States, conceded this point. He said: "With a nation as with individuals who make up a nation, material well-being is an indispensible foundation. Upon the material well-being as a foundation must be raised the structure of lofty life of the spirit, if this nation is properly to fulfill its great mission and to accomplish all that we so ardently hope and desire."

Care should be exercised not to interpret the principle of "Historical Materialism" in the terms of economic fatalism, mechanical materialism or philosophical atheism. They have nothing in common and Karl Marx, while holding to the former, repudiated the latter. Nor must it be understood as excluding mental, moral and spiritual thoughts, feelings and aspirations as social forces. While the phylogenetic and the oceo-genetic forces are not emphasized by modern socialism, they are recognized by it as no less real than the ontogenetic. It does not deny that ideals may influence historical developments and individual conduct; and that men have and can, under great moral exertion and material sacrifice, rise above their environment and lead their age. Marx and Engels themselves are striking examples of this fact.

Frederick Engels himself has made the matter clear enough in the following language: "According to the materialistic view of history, the factor which is, in the last instance, decisive in history is the production and reproduction of actual life. More than this neither Marx nor I have ever asserted. **But when any one distorts this so as to read that the economic factor is the sole element, he converts the statement into a meaningless, abstract, absurd phrase.** The economic condition is the **basis,** but the various elements of the superstructure —the political forms of the class contests, and their results, the constitutions, the legal forms, and also all reflexes of these actual contests in the brains of the participant, the political, legal, philosophical theories, the religious views . . . all these exert an influence on the development of the historical struggles, and, in many instances, determine their form."

Surplus Value

To make the matter of Surplus Value plain it is necessary to advance a few of the primary principles of Socialist economics:

1. Modern wealth consists of an immense accumulation of commodities.

2. A commodity is a useful article converted out of raw material, an object outside of us, a thing that by its properties satisfies human wants of one kind or another.

3. All commodities are produced by the application of human labor-power, mental and manual, to the natural resources of the world.

4. The exchange value of a commodity is the amount of labor-power necessary to produce it, represented in it.

5. All wealth being the product of human labor, of hand and head, the worker is, in justice, entitled to all the wealth he produces, the full product of his toil.

6. Under capitalistic society, the worker has nothing to sell but his labor-power (he is a commodity), and this he must and does sell on the labor market for wages, a small part of the wealth he produces when permitted to engage in productive employment.

7. Surplus value is the difference between what he produces (most of which he does not get), and the amount he is paid in wages or salaries.

8. Under present conditions, the surplus value profits which go into the coffers of the owning, ruling classes, is about eighty (80) per cent of all the created wealth.

According to United States statistics the amount of wealth produced annually is twenty-five billion ($25,000,000,000), and the share that is paid to labor is five billion ($5,000,000,000), one-fifth of the total. This means one dollar ($1.00) for labor and four dollars ($4.00) for capital. To put the matter another way, it is said that the average production of the workers is twelve dollars and fourteen cents per day, and the average wage per day one dollar and thirty-seven cents ($1.37), leaving a profit of ten dollars and seventy-seven cents ($10.77) per day for the employing class on every wealth producing worker.

A concrete example is presented to us in the Pittsburg district. According to a report issued by the Pittsburg Chamber of Commerce there are in Pittsburg district three thousand six hundred and one manufacturing plants and two hundred and thirty-six thousand employes. The total annual wealth produced by these plants and workers is $618,466,871, and the total wages and salaries paid is $150,000,000, a difference between what the toilers produce and what they get of $468,466,871. This means an average of about $600 a year each for the toilers and nearly a half billion of profits a year for the owners.

Many of the so-called social problems which seem to many rather inexplicable appear perfectly plain in the light of the principle of Surplus Value. It reveals why the rich are getting richer and the poor, if not getting poorer, are making no progress in getting richer and more independent. The worker, whether of head or hand, cannot get richer so long as he receives for his toil only just enough to reproduce his kind and sometimes, as we all know, not enough to do that well. He cannot, simply cannot, make progress in wealth accumulation so long as his employer gets the Surplus Value and this remains, as it must, under present conditions, four-fifths of the total wealth produced. It explains as nothing else can the reason for the many get-rich-quick schemes, the creation of fabulous fortunes of the owning classes within a few years and the universal and constant poverty of the workers.

It also throws light on the concentration of wealth and power that is going on under our eyes all over the world. The profits of the proprietor class being so great they must ever reinvest their funds in new and profitable fields. Thus it happens that under the fierce competition of the system that companies, corporations and combines are finally formed. And soon, in the process of industrial evolution, the landlord, banker and manufacturer become one and the same fellow; the middle class is squeezed to the wall and reduced in numbers and the workers become absolute wage dependents.

Simultaneously with the concentration of wealth goes on the concentration of power. Fabulous wealth on the one hand and dire poverty on the other can be maintained only by armed force and concentrated power. Thus your "Big Business," "Economic Interests" in politics with the result of political machines, bosses and ward-heelers.

The struggle for Surplus Value also shows the real cause of our social corruption. Profits being the rock-bottom incentive of present civilization, it drives men into all sorts of moral and legal crimes. We lie, cheat, defraud, corrupt and graft for profit. We oppress the widow, crush the orphan, deal unjustly with the foreigner and tax the native worker to the limit of endurance for money. We license saloons, run gambling hells and deal in the innocence of pure girlhood and womanhood for gain. We deceive and debauch electors, stuff the ballot box and refuse a just count of votes to secure office and the opportunity to exploit the public. We bribe legislators, corrupt judges and bull-doze mayors and councilmen to obtain special privileges and powers worth millions of money. All this is not simply a local matter, but the universal practice; and distressing and serious as it may be, it is inevitable under our prevailing mode of production and distribution of wealth.

The War of Classes

But these are not all the consequences of capitalism. It creates classes, class interests and class antagonism, struggles, wars. To state the matter in the language of the "Communist Manifesto" "that consequently the whole history of mankind, since the dissolution of primitive tribal society holding land in common ownership, has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes."

It is clear that the struggle noted is not a human struggle for existence against nature, not a racial or religious warfare, not an individual conflict between Smith and Jones, but a class struggle between the owning-ruling-exploiting-profit-taking class and the non-possessing-dependent-working-exploited-wage-receiving class. That such classes have existed and do now exist, that they have had and do now have an antagonistic interests and that they have carried and do now carry on a bitter and relentless warfare (the warfare between capital and labor), ancient, medieval and modern history proves.

The animus of the struggle is not personal feelings and interests, but a more equitable division of created wealth. The real point at issue between the classes is Surplus Value. Capitalists constantly demand a larger amount of Surplus Value (more profits, rent, interest, higher prices for commodities), and they organize, consolidate, monopolize and fight to secure it. If they succeed, it results to the worker in lower wages, longer hours of toil,

insanitary shops, unsafe machinery, child labor, woman labor, foreign labor and disorganized labor. If the capitalist class secures more profits, more Surplus Value, the laboring class must either work harder, longer and produce more wealth or get lower wages. On the other hand, the workers constantly demand a larger amount of the Surplus Value (higher wages, shorter hours, safer and cleaner places to toil, better houses, lower rents and cheaper prices for commodities), and they organize, consolidate, monopolize and fight to secure it. If the workers succeed in securing their demands the capitalist class must take less profit. It is plain that both cannot have the same thing at the same time. It happens therefore that the interests of both classes are not identical, are positively antagonistic, and must ever remain so as long as capitalism endures.

It is evident that Socialism is not the creator of class divisions and the promoter of class hate, as is so often asserted. **Class divisions and class strife are inherent in our social system.** It is the system and not the individual that is responsible for them. Socialism abhors force and strife as much as nature does a vacuum. It delights not in the death and misery of any one. It cannot be destructive of human life and created wealth. It seeks to abolish the causes for these things. What it does do, and this is one of its chief functions, is to call attention to the causes of class interests, divisions and struggles, educate the dispossessed and oppressed masses in the truth and thus avoid personal revenge, murder, violence and civil revolt and to organize the proletarian class, middle class and all others who will heed, into a class-conscious gigantic and world-conquering political party for the purpose of capturing the reins of government, destroying the causes of class divisions and strife and to abolish forever all social classes.

Capitalism, not the capitalist nor the Socialist, is the creator of class divisions and class struggles. As such it must fall. The vast proletarian army, that is it's creation and the warfare it is forced to carry on with the exploiting class, will compel it to rise up and unite to emancipate itself and the world. The class struggles form a series of social evolutions that have this for their goal. In the language of the "Manifesto" Socialism declares, "that the history of these class struggles forms a series of evolution in which, now-a-days, a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class without, at the same time, and once and for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinctions and class struggles."

Collectivism

On the positive side the objective of Socialism is the establishment of a "Universal Co-operative Commonwealth." It demands a world of the people, by the people and for the people; the universal realization of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity; the absolute sway of democracy in every institution in which man lives, moves and has his being. It means and seeks to realize a world collectively owned and democratically controlled.

Put in forms of proportions, it stands thus:

1. The collective ownership of all capital, all means of life, and the private ownership of wealth, the product of toil.
2. Production for use and not for profit.
3. Co-operation in industry and commerce.
4. Compulsory labor for all able-bodied men.
6. Democracy in politics with universal and equal franchise, the initiative, referendum and recall.

The full ripe fruit of the operation of the Socialist social order, will be: Economic and political independence, intellectual and religious freedom, the universal practice of the teachings of Jesus Christ, the fraternization of humanity and a united world in the arms of peace and plenty. **The triumph of Socialism will mean a chance for children to enjoy childhood; for woman to be womanly; for men to be manly, and the whole world to attain the end of its creation.**

Socialists confidently expect Socialism to triumph and become the successor of capitalism as the world's social regime. The logical issues of capitalism, the demands of justice, the welfare of the race, the increasing and rising social and moral consciousness, the inherent and universal love of peace and plenty, the omnipresent principle of progress, in short, all the social forces, ontogenetic, phylogenetic and sociogenetic, will compel the world ultimately to adopt Socialism as the next social order. To assist in the evolution of society to this revolution, to educate the masses and prepare the world for this social change is the purpose and end of the national and international Socialist movement.

Socialists affirm that a social system that sanctions such an unequal and iniquitous division of wealth as we now have is nothing else than legalized plunder, open and defiant confiscation, the rankest injustice, worthy only of the scorn and contempt of intelligent and righteous men; a system that is directly responsible for class interests, divisions and wars that makes the brotherhood of man impossible, is unfit to hold dominion over the world; that creates and maintains nine-tenths of all the moral, social and political evils of the world in spite of the thundering protests of God and crushed humanity, is weighed in the scales of justice and found wanting; that feeds and fattens on the blood, poverty and slavery of millions of precious innocent children, helpless young women, mothers and widows, and dependent sons and fathers should, and of necessity must, perish from the earth. It ought to die. Nature, God and all honest men who understand, cry out against it, demand its utter overthrow, and society will yet unite to accomplish the task.

The Bible and Our Social Order

By Rev. Wm. A. Prosser, Ames M. E. Church, Pittsburgh

What is the origin, nature and destiny of present civilization? Is it of Divine, or human origin? Does it operate to the advantage of the few, or the many? Is it lasting, or a passing phase in social evolution? Does it measure up to the demands of justice? How does it appear in the light of reason and of the Bible? These are fair and honest questions now on the lips or in the heart of everybody, and they deserve a fair and candid answer.

According to the "Synoptic Gospels" Jesus defined the present order, assuming it was the same in principle then as now, as materialistic, Mammonistic, hypocritical and absolutely Godless. He scathingly denounced it as cruelly competitive, oppressively extortinate, materialistic in motive and objective, class-partial in ethics, religion and politics, and as making it utterly impossible for a man to live according to its rules and at the same time be a true worshiper of God and a faithful disciple of His. Hence His bold statement, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon," and His demand that he who would be His follower must "leave all, take up his cross and follow Him." He demanded, in the name of God and humanity, the complete overthrow of the present order and the substitution therefor of the co-operative commonwealth, the Kingdom of God and His justice. Jesus was a red-hot, thoroughgoing revolutionist.

Professor Thomas C. Hall, in "Social Solutions in the Light of Christian Ethics," Page 47, has defined our present civilization as a competitive commercial industrialism, with profits as incentive to action, and privative possession of the productive tools and opportunity as its goal. These principles and the social order growing out of them he declares to be anti-Christian. His words are, "The social order and the political state are not now Christian, **and never have been really Christian**, even when calling themselves so."

To grasp the significance of these deliberate judgments, and to understand the reason why the present social order is and must be Godless, it is necessary to understand the nature and effects of the fundamental economic principles underlying it. Chief among them are:

1st. The private ownership and control of the means and opportunities of human existence.

2nd. Production, transportation, exchange, speculation and all human service for profit.

3rd. Competition in all lines of activity, industry, commerce, politics and religion. A deadly free scramble for things, position and office.

4th. Free contract in labor, which means if you do not care to work for one master you can quit and attach yourself to another. You can work when, where and for whom you please.

5th. Laissez faire in politic; the let-alone principle; non-interference of government with the liberty of the individual in production and trade; absolute uncontrolled, unrestricted competition; the severance of business and politics.

These are the primary principles of the present-day complex civilization. They are logically tied together and stand or fall together. They constitute the base and produce and color the superstructure. They find expression in national, state and municipal constitutions; in legislation and judicial decisions; in business and politics; in educational, religious and social circles. They are omnipresent and omnipotent. They are the creative social forces in individual and institutional life and the directive agents in historical development.

In a world of limited resources and opportunities; in an age of harnessed natural forces, machine production, socialized industry and centers of immense and greatly congested population; in a world and age such as we live, the operation of these economic principles logically and inevitably result in a one-sided, corrupt and Godless civilization. They work disastrously to the physical, mental, moral, religious, social and political life of society. Like all sin, when full grown, they produce death. They result in the commercialization and prostitution of the individual and institution; in concentration of wealth and the monopoly of the opportunities of life; in fabulous fortunes and limitless power for the few and ceaseless grinding toil, continual poverty and servitude for the many; in class interests, divisions, discrimination, wars and universal disorder or forced peace; in a government of, by and for the predominating commercial interests, and in a state of general social perversion and corruption from the brothel, saloon and gambling hells up through business, politics, social circles, courts, schools and churches. This and much more is the legitimate offspring of these monstrous principles, and that this is not imagination, but cold fact, requires no further proof than that we are now suffering these things the world over, and that they persist despite our wailings, thundering protests and reformatory efforts. The seed has been sown, the harvest must be reaped.

But let not our word, nor the words of other men, nor even the present horrible social conditions pass as ultimate authority. Let us test, both the principles and the results, the base and superstructure of the present social order in the light of the teachings of the Bible.

The Bible

Let me remind you that if God is the God of the universe, of this and all other worlds, the presupposition is that He is somehow concerned with and about this planet. He must have a plan of social life for it. If the Bible is God's word, a revelation of God's will to men, it presupposes that God's plan will be formed therein. If God and the Bible are all we are taught to believe they are, they cannot be silent on nor indifferent to the great social concerns of men any less than to the spiritual, and they are not. True to the presuppositions in the case we find that God has spoken and His clear social message, His social plan for the government of this world, is definitely stated, in general principles, in the Bible. These principles are diametrically opposite and deadly opposed to the principles of present social order as we shall see.

The Collective Ownership of Capital

The first and chief stone in the foundation of the present social structure is, as we have seen, the private ownership of the world. Against this principle the Bible sets its face like flint, and boldly contends for the collective ownership of all capital. The Mosaic legislation decreed, and it is the spirit of the entire Bible, that the title of the world and all there is therein, all land and all it contained, is vested, not in man or any company of men, but in God. God was the Creator of the world, and therefore the owner of the full product of His toil. When the Israelitish slaves were settled in Canaan, "The Promised Land," they were directed to divide the land among them by families, but were strictly forbidden to buy or sell it in fee simple. Land speculation and land stealing were denounced as heinous social sins before Jehovah and the community and punishable by severe penalties. Provision was made, however, that if by misfortune any one was obliged to sell part or the whole of his inheritance, he could do so subject to redemption by him or a near relative at any time. If this could not be done, it was to revert back to the original owner, without price, at the year Jubilee. The sale was to assist a family in an emergency, and the year of Jubilee was the period of restitution. The land-laws struck at the root of the private ownership of the country and the concentration of wealth. Carefully note the passages and references offered in evidence of the correctness of these statements.

In the very first chapter of Genesis (28-30) God is represented as defining to man the purpose of the earth and his prerogatives in it. It is said: And God blessed them and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, and **subdue** it; and have **dominion** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. Notice man is to populate the earth and subdue the earth, **but not to own it.** He is to have dominion over all creation, fish, birds, and beasts, **but not over man.** The same important truth is set forth in the 8th Psalm. It is the sense of both these passages and of the entire Bible that man is not to **privately own** the earth nor to **rule over his fellow-man.**

In Exodus 9-29 we are told that Moses reminded Pharoah that "the earth is Jehovah's." And speaking as the mouth-piece of Jehovah, he is represented as saying to the liberated Israelites, "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then shall ye be mine own possession from among all peoples: **for all the earth is mine.**" Exodus 19:5-6. In Deut. 10:14 we read: "Behold unto Jehovah thy God belongeth heaven and the heaven of heavens, **the earth with all that is therein.**" And Psalm 24:1 declares: "The earth is Jehovah's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein." Paul utters the same truth in I Corinthians 10:26.

In anticipation of their settlement in Canaan the Israelites were very definitely told that "the land shall not be sold in perpetuity; for the reason that the land is mine, and ye are resident aliens and settlers with Me." Lev. 25:23. If, however, any one were obliged to sell his property, it could only be bought and sold subject to redemption and reversion. The law regarding it is as follows:

"In all the land of our possession ye shall allow land to be redeemed. If thy fellow countryman become poor and sell some of his possessions, his kinsman who is nearest him shall come and redeem that which his brother hath sold. And if a man have no one to redeem it, and he become rich and find sufficient to redeem it, then let him count the years since its sale and refund the value of the remainder (until the year Jubilee) to the man to whom he sold it; thus he may return to his possession. But if he be not able to get it back for himself, then that which he hath sold shall remain in the hand of him that bought it until the year Jubilee; **and in the year Jubilee it shall go out and he shall return unto his possession.**" Lev. 25:24-28.

Whenever these provisions were violated and contempuously trampled under foot by the strong, as they were repeatedly under the Monarchy, they were denounced as infringments of Jehovah's law and the guilty parties punished when possible. "Woe," thunders the mighty Isaiah, Woe to the monopolists, "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no room and ye are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land." 5:8. "Woe to them," says Micah, "that devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds. When morning is light, they practice it, **because it is in the power of their hand.**" 2:1-2. In this connection read carefully the following passages: I Kings 21, Jeremiah 22:13-17, Habakkuk 2:9-12.

To fully appreciate the Mosaic economic principle of the collective ownership of capital and the unreserved and unanimous prophetic condemnation of the slightest infraction of it, it must be remembered that the operation of the principle of the private ownership of capital carries with it the inevitable result of the concentration of wealth and power in few hands and the impoverishment and enslavement of the masses. Then, as now, the private ownership of the world inevitably results in the strong, unscrupulous and cunning gaining the ascendency over the multitudes and ruling them with a rod of iron. Moses, the Prophets and Jesus saw it, as we do today, and denounced it as infamous before God; and sought to supplant it by the establishment of an industrial commonwealth.

The Private Ownership of Wealth

Following from the operation of the private ownership, as naturally as light from the blazing sun, is production, transportation, exchange, speculation, all forms of human activity, for profit. The prevailing and predominate incentive of the system is profit. It is not for God's sake nor man's sake, but **My** sake we toil. The principal means through which profits are made are: Unearned increment, surplus value, rents and interest, which are, in last analysis, nothing but various forms of exploitation, and exploitation in any form, plainly stated, is nothing but legalized plunder.

Now it is a fact which every one can verify for himself that the Bible sets forth the very opposite incentive to action and methods of making a living. Its economic principles declare for an equitable division of the land among the families, enforced and useful labor six days a week, complete cessation from toil one day in seven, the full product of toil to the worker, fair exchange for use in commerce and voluntary service for the common good. The ideal demanded was that every family should be in possession of, and perfectly safe, under their own vine and fig tree. Isaiah 65: 21-25 states the matter thus: "They shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree, shall be the days of my people, **and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.** They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for calamnity, for exploitation, for they are the seed of Jehovah and their offspring with them." Compare I Kings 4:25, Micah 4:4 and Zachariah 3:10. It is not surprising, therefore, that we find the Bible bitterly attacking the principle, incentive and the various forms of acquiring profits.

Studiously scan this passage as bearing on service for profits: "Hear this, I pray you," cries the intrepid Micah, "ye heads of the house of Jacob, and rulers of the house of Israel, that abhor justice and pervert equity. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money." 3:9-12. See also Isaiah 1:21-33.

Set over against this the commended motive that led Moses to work for the liberation of the enslaved people of God; the incentive that stirred the souls of Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah and the rest of the prophets in their social and religious labors, and that demanded by Christ from every one who would enter into and build up the Kingdom of God on earth, and you will readily discern the marked difference. The social system of private ownership demands profits for service, while the Bible, God's social plan, demands service for the common weal; and that the most efficient shall be the servants of the less competent and the strong shall bear the burdens of the weak. Here is all the difference between God and Mammon, Heaven and Hell, Good and Evil, selfish individualism and holy collectivism.

Interest Condemned

No less emphatic is the Bible on the subject of taking interest on loans. The Bible term usury and our word interest are synonymous and mean the same thing. They mean an income, all incomes, from things loaned and it is this very thing that the Bible forbids.

Exodus 22:25 says: "If thou lend money to any of my people with thee who is poor, **thou shalt not be to him as a creditor, neither shall ye demand interest of him.**"

In Deut. 23:19 we read: "Thou shalt not lend on interest to thy fellow countryman: interest on money, food or on anything that is lent on interest."

In Lev. 25 it is said: "If thy fellow countryman become poor and fall into poverty with thee, thou shalt support him and he shall live with thee. Take of him no interest or increase, but fear God, that thy fellow countryman may live with thee. **Thou shalt not give him thy money on interest, nor give him thy food for usury.**" See also Deut. 23:19, Neh. 5:1-13, Psalm 15, Proverbs 28:8, Isaiah 24:2, Ezekiel 18:8-17 and 22:12.

Psalm 15:5 and Ezekiel 18:8 go farther than to forbid the taking of interest. They declare that a man is not just before God and man, we would say, is not and cannot be a Christian and take interest from his brothers on loans.

But not only was interest forbidden, but also mortgages and security for loans. Deut. 24: 6-17 distinctly states: "No man shall take the nether or upper mill-stone to pledge: for he taketh a man's life to pledge. When thou lendest thy brother anything, thou shall not go into his house to fetch the pledge. Thou shalt stand abroad and the man to whom thou doest lend shall bring out the pledge abroad to thee. And if the man be poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge; in any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment and bless thee: and it shall be righteousness unto thee before Jehovah thy God."

But even this is not all. Legal provision was made that if a man borrowed and was unable to meet his obligation he was to be **released from it entirely in the "Seventh Year."** And the prosperous were warned not to be hard-hearted, tight-fisted or refuse to heed the calls of the needy on this account. See Deut. 15:1-10.

The echo of this provision is found in the New Testament. Christ directed His disciples to "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not away." Matthew 5:42. And in Luke 6:34 we read that He said to them: "If we lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? For sinners also lend to sinners to receive as much again. But love your enemies and do good **and lend hoping for nothing again**; and your reward shall be great, **and ye shall be the children of the Highest**; for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."

Not only does the Bible, both the Old and New Testaments, denounce the taking of interest as deadly sin, but so also did the Ante-Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, the Reformers and the whole Christian Church, both Catholic and Protestant, down to about the middle of the 18th century. St. Basil called money at interest as a "fecund monster." St. Gregory of Nyssa calls down on him who lends money at interest the vengeance of the Almighty. Lactautius denounced the taking of interest "robbery." St. Ambrose declared it as bad as murder. Pope Leo the Great solemnly adjudged it a sin worthy of severe punishment. Luther said: "To exchange anything with any one and gain by the exchange is not to do a charity, but to steal. Every usurer is a thief worthy of the gibbet. I call those usurers who lend money at 5 or 6 per cent. Melanchthen, Luther's partner in the Reformation, declared every person taking interest for money a thief. This was the unanimous and universal verdict of the Christian Church from the first to the eighteenth century. From that time on concessions to money lenders were made until now the Church is as still as death on the subject. The reasons for the first evasions and

THE CHRISTIAN SOCIALIST

Issued Weekly

The Co-Operative Printing Company
Address, 5443 Drexel Ave., Chicago
Telephone, Midway 2349

Subscription Price - - - One Dollar Per Year
Six months 50c. Three Months 25c.

Entered at the Post Office at Chicago, Illinois, as second class matter.

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concessions and finally for absolute silence on the matter are perfectly plain to all students of industrial and social evolution. For the position of the Church on the subject of interest down the ages see Andrew White's "A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology," Vol. II, Pages 264-287.

To fully appreciate the severe attitude of the Bible toward all forms of exploitation (rent, interest, surplus value, speculation and service for personal gain) its point of view must be understood. It regards all forms of exploitation as a direct and wilful violation of God's social plan for society; that it impoverishes and enslaves the common people; that it divides and corrupts society from foot to head and skin to soul, and makes universal peace, happiness and brotherhood absolutely impossible. That this view was correct the writers were sure, for they saw these results all about them. It was a cold fact, no less true now than then, that under a social system of exploitation God, justice, truth, mercy, peace, universal plenty and brotherhood become dreams, fond dreams, but only dreams, far away from social realities. They are pleasing platitudes to tickle the fancy and placate a guilty conscience, but not living things governing society. Exploitation has no more use for the "square deal" for fair play between man and man, and man and God, for the "higher life," than a dog fight has for the Golden Rule. It will crush the people of God and grind the face of the poor, as Isaiah tells us, with less concern than it will wear away the face of a grind-stone. It will eat the flesh of the people and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh for the cauldron, as Micah reminds us with less compunction of conscience than it will skin and quarter a jack-rabbit. It will oppress, enslave and impoverish the toiling masses, even its own kith and kin, for gain. It is a soulless and merciless brute prowling by day and by night seeking whom it may devour.

Read and reread Exodus 1:8-14, 5:1-14, Kings 21:1-26, Nehemiah 5:1-13 and Matthew 23:1-36, then add to these a few chapters on the conditions of the toiling millions in the industrial centers of the modern world, and you will clearly see what exploitation will do to the common people to reach its diabolical end; and why every lover of God and human kind, from Moses, the prophets, Christ, the reformers down to this very hour, have set their faces like flint against it, denounced it and them who profit by it, and sought with all their might to overthrow it.

Political Democracy

An inevitable political result of the economic principle of the private ownership of Capital is not continued Laissez-faire, but the absolute subordination of the state to predominating commercial interests, "Big Business" and a government of force. History proves that this result obtained among both Jew and Gentile in Biblical times. It obtains today and will tomorrow, so long as the principle is practiced. The owning class is always the ruling class, and vice versa; class interests must result in class government. Centralized property always means centralized government. The exploitation of labor and of society which results in concentration of wealth must be defended by concentrated and brutal governmental power. Hence your policeman with club and blackjack, the State Constabulary with gun and sabre, the increasing army and navy with a death-dealing armament costing millions of money, always ready both for internal revolt and foreign war. And this gigantic police power is the creature of and is at the beck and call of the property class. Micah reminds us that the ruling class carry out their night-made evil designs because "it is in the power of their hands." It is inevitable.

The Bible opposes both centralized government and government by force. Its plan is decentralized government, a democracy safeguarded by the recall. It stands for a universal kingdom founded upon justice; for the universal brotherhood of man based upon community of interests.

When the Jews began their independent national existence they started as a democracy, as pure a democracy as conditions warranted. They had tribal and local autonomy, but were nationally tied together by bonds of common blood, religion, ideals and interests. Their differences were adjusted and their quarrels settled by "Judges," elected by the people and subject to recall for cause. In this way they got along and made progress for a period of about half a Millennium.

In 1030 B. C. the local rulers, not the common people, clamored for a King. They contended they wanted to be on par with the nations about them. They saw in Monarchy advantages for themselves. They got a King; they founded a Monarchy and, in so doing, rejected God and started on the road to national dacay, degeneration and death.

Samuel pointed out the nature and inevitable results of centralized government in this classical passage. After reporting Jehovah as saying: "Harken unto the voice of the people in all they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee in choosing a King, but **they have rejected me** that I should not be king over them," he says: "This shall be the manner of the King that shall reign over you; he will take your sons and appoint them unto him for his chariots and to be his horse-men; and they shall run before his chariots; and he will appoint them unto him for captains of thousands and captains of fifties; and he will set some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of way and the instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be perfumers and to be cooks and bakers. He will take your fields and your vineyards and your olive-yards, **even the best of them, and give them to his servants.** He will take the tenth of your seed and of your olive-yards and give them to his officers and to his servants. He will take your men-servants and your maid-servants and your goodliest young men and your asses and **put them to his work.** He will take the tenth of your flocks; and ye shall be **his servants.**" How true all this is to history.

Jesus came not to abrogate the "Law" but to fullfill it; not to overthrow the Mosaic democracy, but to realize it. If He changed it at all, He only changed its form and application. He simply gave it the broadest meaning and extended it to include every man on earth. His kingdom and justice of God was nothing more than the Mosaic democracy universalized. In speaking to His disciples did He not say, in pointing out the difference of the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Mammon, "Ye know that they who are accounted to rule over the Gentiles, lord it over them; and their great ones exercise authority over them. **But it shall not be so among you:** but whosoever would become great among you shall be your servant." Mark 10:42-45. And again, when contrasting the attitude of the Jewish rulers with them, he said: "Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Teacher, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on earth; for one is your Father, even He who is in heaven. Neither be ye called Masters; for one is your Master even Christ." Matthew 23:1-12.

Further, the Bible repeatedly assures us that God is the All-Father, and is not the respector of one child as against another. If this be accepted as a true religious principle, we must ask if it has any limitations in application? Does it obtain equally in law and Grace, in State and Church, in Commerce and Politics, in Education and Society? If it is a valid principle, universally applicable, then there is only one conclusion: God's plan of human life is a democracy in which every man shall have an equal opportunity to life, liberty and happiness.

These Biblical principles, and others not elaborated here, are pure unadulterated Marxian Socialism. They are not contradictory nor supplementary, but identical with Socialism. Their demands are the same. Both demand the collective ownership of the world, production for use, full product of toil to the workers, co-operation and genuine democracy. They both stand for a universal kingdom owned in common and democratically controlled. The adoption of Christianity by society will mean the adoption of all that Socialism stands for and the adoption of the economic and political principles of Socialism, as the world's Social order, will give Christianity the first chance it has had in history to realize itself. Socialism is Christianity applied. Socialism and Christianity stand or fall, succeed or fail together. Moses, Christ and Marx are indissolubly tied together and no one should attempt to divide that which God has joined together. He who would faithfully follow either one must, consciously or unconsciously, follow all.

Here lies before us God's social plan for this world. You may call it Socialism or Christianity, either or both, it is the same thing. But it is not here and cannot come under Capitalism. The problem is how to adopt it. Shall we wait for it to adopt itself? It would take too long if it ever came. Shall we wait for the lords and masters who profit by the present regime to inaugurate it for us? No; for they never have and never will do that. We must adopt it ourselves. God's poor, the dispossessed, exploited and crushed millions must adopt it if it is ever adopted. Let, therefore, all of God's people, in and out of the Church, join hands and feet, heads and hearts, interests and destiny, and band themselves together in the world-wide, class-conscious and militant Socialist movement and vote it, the only political party in the world that stands for pure democracy, for the adoption of every fundamental social principle of Christianity, and the elevation of the masses into power. The hope of Christianity and of Socialism, of the long-looked-for and much-needed Revolution is the workers of the world. Workers of the world, Unite! and lift yourselves and your God and His Christ unto the social throne of the world. The fight is bitter but the fruit will be sweet.

REV. F. U. MILLAR WILL ADDRESS THE CHICAGO CHRISTIAN SOCIALIST FELLOWSHIP

Rev. F. U. Millar, pastor of the Woodlawn Universalist Church, will address the Fellowship Sunday afternoon, January 28, at 2:30 p. m., at Masonic Temple, Hall 811.

Comrade Millar has recently joined our Fellowship and will speak on "Why I am a Christian Socialist." All members are urged to invite their friends and give our good Brother a splendid hearing and a cordial welcome into our Fellowship. Mrs. Ella Carr, Secretary.

READ IT

The Sunday school lesson comments in this issue by Rev. Wm. A. Prosser furnish a splendid example of his power in this line. They make a thrilling, instructive article. Read it.

The regular prices for bundles are one cent per copy, 500 for $4.50, and 1,000 for $8.

The Short Story

THE GREAT CONTRADICTION

Written for the Christian Socialist, by Wm. Yerington, Waterloo, Iowa

There were three of them sitting about the hard coal fire that winter evening while the January wind roared outside, driving the snow in blizzards past the village, and chilling wayfarers to the bone. Davis was pastor of the only church there, and Williams was the sole banker of the little community; the boy was Davis' son—a small lad with intelligent mouth and sharp eyes, a lad just arrived at the period when one's whole life is a question mark and an exclamation point.

Davis was reading the paper, and when he glanced up there was a moisture in his eyes. In fact, it had been difficult for him to peruse the page, it had blurred so often; he had found it necessary to pause several times and surreptitiously blink away the mist. The boy had listened intensely throughout, never once unfixing his eyes from the reader's face.

The newspaper item they had just read was common enough—the story of a man hanged for murder—a victim whose life had been strangled out by a noose because Society was incompetent to deal with him otherwise. There are many such unfortunates who cannot fit themselves into our social organism thus stamped out every year. Then why should this particular case so enlist the sympathy of a little group about the coal fire?

Davis was the first to speak after several minutes' pause in which he studied the red coals. "I knew this man Strove," he said. "He was a member of my church when he lived here, and, as is my custom with parishoners, I have kept watch of him ever since. I knew him to be an industrious, thrifty, honest man—as good as the majority of us, or better. When he left here he had a little bank account—a hundred dollars or so; and his family was one of the happiest it had been my privilege to know. He had rosy dreams of the day when he should own a home, and when his children (he had four) should reap the fruits of his industry and thrift. I know he stinted himself continually, going without respectable clothes and sacrificing all the little cheap luxuries, in order that his dream might be realized. I never saw a fonder father or a tenderer husband; I never saw a man who came nearer to making the Golden Rule into daily living; I never saw a more humble, reverent spirit—a plain, great-hearted, sincere man. Few were his words; he spoke seldom of himself; his natural selfishness had been transformed into a clear-burning passion to see his children lead rich and happy lives. When he grasped my hand at the train his whole heart thrilled into it like an electric current; he looked into my face with his honest eyes, and said fervently, 'God bless you, Elder.' I answered, 'God bless you,' and repeated the words several times. And is this God's way of blessing? Or is it a piece of tragic irony, played by fate?

"Well, he went to Chicago, and got work in a shoe factory at $1.75 a day—the highest wages he had ever earned. I saw him about six months afterward; he was looking fine; I ate supper at his home, and a happier family it was never my fortune to see. He informed me with glistening eyes that he had bought the house they lived in, and had already paid two hundred dollars on it. His future was rainbow-tinted and sunrise-hued. He talked of the day when the children should go to college and get the training he had been denied. His shoulders were beginning to stoop, and his hair was streaked with gray; but that was nothing; he never thought of it; for his personal hungers had been submerged.

"So the crash came unheralded, without approaching shadow of presentiment. About a year from that time, he went out to work one morning with a heavy heart; for, a recent child-birth having been improperly cared for, the mother's life hung in a balance, and any slight agitation might tip the scales against her. But, as he trudged through deep snow, his old heart was somewhat cheered by the thought that their home was paid for within twenty dollars, and that the day's work ahead would swell their bank account to thirty, leaving ten dollars extra for medical care; then, if it was found necessary, they could mortgage the little home for a hundred or so. With these thoughts dispelling the darkness over his heart, he lifted his eyes from the snow, and this sign, nailed to the factory door, confronted him: 'Closed until further notice.' Without a moment's hesitation he started off in search of new work. He was refused bruskly everywhere; they had more men than they wanted. Some of the other factories had closed too, and the rest were laying off men continually. The truth burst upon him. There was a panic!

"All that week and the next he hunted desperately for work; but his quest was unavailing. Morning after morning he went out with dinner-pail in hand, trying to be cheerful; evening after evening he came home, tired out, hungry, shivering, despondent. Nowhere in that great empty solitude of city, that city of luxury and starvation; of impudent wealth and unspeakable poverty; of millionaires and paupers; nowhere in that wilderness of human need could he find a chance to earn bread and shelter. Weeks passed; broken-spirited and bent, he had dragged himself along the streets, a hungry, shivering, tottering piece of humanity, finding once in a while a half-dollar job, but more often returning home empty-handed.

"He and his were mere atoms in the amorphous human mass, and the huge pitiless world was deaf to his prayer for a chance to work. Meanwhile the payments lapsed; the boy earned a few pennies (and lost his soul) selling papers; the older girl—she was fifteen—clerked at a ribbon counter for three dollars a week. They became irritable from under-nourishment; the clamor of their bodies for food they mistranslated into abnormal craving. The boy became an habitual thiever of coal, representing that he had bought it with his pennies; he rapidly degenerated into a gamin. The girl began to put on paint and cheap fineries; several times she brought home mysterious money, but lied brazenly when asked where she got it. One evening she did not come home; they sat up all night waiting for her. Gradually an awful suspicion grew within them, but they dared not whisper it to one another. If it was true that extra money was explainable now.

"Meantime the mortgage he had put on their home matured; it was immediately foreclosed, and they were turned out into the street. And here I shall have to drop the curtain, for the poor fellow, as he told me his story in the cell, shuddered when he came to that point, and would not continue. But I managed to get from him a few driblets from which I could build up the rest of the tale.

"It seems that after wandering about a few days, sleeping in cellars and eating charity's crust, Strove fell into a violent illness, probably induced by the starvation and hardships and mental torture of the past six weeks. For I know him well enough to be sure that he smuggled his share of food into the children's mouths, and went half clothed, that they might cover themselves with his coat. He was taken to a Catholic hospital, where he lay in delirium for weeks, hovering between life and death.

"Finally reason returned, and with it the horrible memory of that winter. At first he moaned helplessly for his wife and children, but, with returning strength, that moan became and insistent heart-piercing cry, and finally an imperative demand to be released, that he might dredge the city till they were found. What were the suffering and heart-torture of those weary weeks following (a period of dumb, black misery) I could only guess from the broken, chaotic speech and the poor convict's manner as he gave me incoherent fragments of his life's story. It was like getting glimpses by flashes of lightening into an awful tragedy. He was as one who, at the edge of a frightful abyss of hell, glanced down, shuddered and withdrew, to summon up courage for another look.

"Well, the upshot was that at the end of many wretched weeks of hunger and blind searching, in which he wandered insanely in that human wilderness, he met his wife at a brothel, and learned from her lips the tragedy of her life. For some time—a fortnight, she thought—after Strove fell ill, they had dragged themselves about, half-starved, half-frozen, exhausted, heart and limb. One night the boy deserted them—she had not seen him since; and a few mornings afterward, as she woke from a stupor of exhaustion on the stone floor of a cellar, she discovered that the younger daughter—a girl of fourteen—had gone. She hugged the baby to her breast, to give it what little warmth she had; but it cried with cold and hunger, and would not be satisfied. Maddened with outraged mother-love she dashed out into the street; a score of resolutions sprang up within her almost simultaneously, and threw her into a torture of irresolution. She would take it to the Home; she would leave it on someone's doorstep; she would plunge with it into the river; she would steal; she would go and go, never pausing till work was found. To part with it her heart would not permit; she had lost everything else; her whole mother-instinct became a deafening voice forbidding her. So the purpose to find work conquered for a while, and she walked on, the baby crying at her breast. All that day she searched desperately, but was met with refusal everywhere. She begged whiskey and stale bread at saloons, and for a few moments each time experienced a heaven of warmth; the baby cried incessantly. At dusk she was staggering, and the child was feverishly sick. She opened a saloon door, and fell full length upon the floor.

"When she came to consciousness, a group of men surrounded her; the baby was moaning with pain, in a bartender's arms. She told them her story, but, before she had finished, the proprietor motioned the audience away, and made a proposition that brought the blood to her face. 'I've got a Hotel,' he said, 'you go up there and I'll give you ten dollars a week.' 'No, no,' she moaned; 'I'd rather die, and the baby too.' The proprietor argued with her, assuring her that starvation was just outside, and that he had a dozen young girls who were getting no more than that. But the mother only moaned, and called for her baby. Pretty soon, feeling she was no longer welcome there, she got up wearily and went out, smothering the child with kisses.

"But it was as the proprietor had said. Starvation was outside, and Winter, too, like Nemeses following at her heels, relentless, unpitying. Before long she began to stagger again, and the baby went into convulsions. A wild resolution leaped up within her. 'Why not?' she thought. 'The world won't let me make a living if I'm good; then I'll be bad.' She turned and went back to the saloon. And the rest of her story is hell.

"Since that hour Strove was a changed man. He took to thieving and drinking and gambling. He dropped into damnation as though it had been a precipice down which he was hurled irresistibly; and he lay at the bottom and outraged, ruined besotted piece of humanity.

"You know the rest—except this, and I can swear it is the truth: his gambling comrades tried to cheat him out of a stake he had justly won at the table; they thought they could worst him because he was half crazy. In the scuffle that ensued he pulled a revolver and shot them both; then he tried to unload it into his own brains, but the police interfered and hustled him to jail. Yesterday he was crushed by the enginery of the Law.

"Is he some prey that fate, like a great beast, has tortured and torn and mangled, and then thrown quivering on the rocks to die? or was his life an awful tragedy, written by God to teach mankind some truth yet dark to us? or has society fallen into a leprous disease, of which he is a symptom? Never shall be erased from my memory that picture of him as he sat there in the cell, his chin on his breast—the long unkempt hair, prematurely white; the haunted eyes; the battered face; the broken body shaken with sobs every now and then, as he glanced into the past. I could not help thinking as we sat there that he was a plaything of omnipotent, pitiless forces of which man knows nothing; a victim of cosmic caprice; a foil of that soulless Ironist we call the Universe. Oh, may the God who is love forgive me for blaspheming His world

and putting in His place this ghastly travesty of things.

"When I parted from him that day, he grasped my hand fiercely, as though he felt himself sinking in the fluid infinite of Night, and I were the only straw within his reach. Involuntarily we both dropped to our knees, and after I had poured out myself to God, he choked out a prayer—the most heart-stabbing words I ever heard. The last thing he said to me was, 'I guess the Game's all right; I didn't play it right, some way, and I lost.' All the words I could find were, 'God bless you,' and I repeated them over and over.

"What was I, that I should presume to speak consolation to such a life? How could I, who have never suffered, sympathize with that abyssmal despair? All I could do was leave him to that Other Sufferer. And I know that he lies now on the bosom of Him who pardoned Mary Magdalene. As I walked from the prison his last words rang in my ears, 'The Game's all right, only I played it wrong, and lost.'

"Is the game all right? He meant to vindicate God, I know. But is God the author of the game in which he lost? Or is it an impudent man-made travesty?"

For the first time the boy's eyes wandered from his father; the perplexed look deepened on his face. He studied the red coals. "Why couldn't he get work," he said; "didn't anybody have any work for anybody to do?"

"Oh, yes," answered the minister; "there was plenty of work waiting to be done. Thousands the country over were suffering for want of food and clothes and shelter."

The boy was silent. "I don't understand," he said, after studying the fire several minutes.

"Well, it's this way," Banker Williams explained, searching for a simple expression of the economic situation, "the factories had made more than the people could buy, and so, since they couldn't sell what they'd already made, they closed down, thus throwing men like Strove out of employment."

The boy's question was immediate: "How can there be too much—as long as there's anybody that hasn't enough?"

"But these men don't own the food and the other things," replied Williams, condescendingly.

"Why not?" came the rapid cross-examination; "didn't they make them?"

"Yes; but other men own the machines and factories."

"Why do you let them if it makes such trouble? and besides, I don't see why people can't buy as long as there's things to sell; I mean, I don't see why they are too poor to buy the things they made themselves."

"If the rich men who own the factories gave their laborers enough money to buy everything they make, their owners get no profit," answered Williams.

"This is a funny world," the boy mused, looking into the coals. "The people that make things don't get them, and a thousand have to starve because one man has got too much of the stuff they've made, so he can have a profit."

David took up the thought. "And so it is decreed by society that a few men, already rich, may control all men's chances to work, and may at any time stop the making of bread or mining coal. The boy is right: why do we let these few profit-mongers own the labor opportunities (the very lives) of a whole nation?"

The boy's face brightened. "Everybody ought to own these things," he said, quickly.

"That would be Socialism," Williams answered, laughing, "and nobody wants Socialism."

"Why not?" persisted the young catechist. "It seems the only sensible thing. It seems to me the natural way. The other way seems pretty——"

"Artificial; abnormal," Davis finished, to supply his son's limited vocabulary.

"This boy has made me think," he resumed, after a few moments, turning to Williams, "You see, Williams, you and I have become gradually accustomed to this artificial condition, and so we've taken it for granted. But this boy has pricked the bubble. He's just an ordinary boy, but he's natural; he looks upon the world with vision uncolored by custom or prejudice. You and I can't judge these things. We are blindfolded by custom. We haven't got imagination enough to transcend custom and see things in an unbiased way. We are like infants that take into their fingers a rattle box from nurse's hand, and straight begin to rattle. We rattle our beliefs just as intelligently."

"But these fault-finding Socialists——" began Williams.

Davis raised his eyebrows. "One would think, from what has been told this evening that things are not altogether above criticism," he said mildly, putting on his overcoat.

"But the confounded fanatics——" Williams exclaimed, starting on another track.

"An excellent argument," interrupted Davis, smiling with friendly sarcasm as he shut the door behind him.

International Sunday School Lessons

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LESSON FOR FEB. 4

The Wise Men Led by the Star. Matt. 2.

Golden Text: Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God and there is none else. Isaiah 45:22.

Four events only of the infancy of Jesus are narrated in the Gospels. The "Circumcision," the "Presentation in the Temple," the "Visit of the Magi," and the "Flight into Egypt." The first two of these occur only in Luke, and the last two in Matthew. The last two constitute our present lesson.

The brief narrative of the visit of the Magi, recorded in the second chapter of Matthew, is of deep interest but of great uncertainty. It suggests questions that neither the narrative itself nor known secular history, answer. Who are they: Magicians, pious students or kings? No one knows. How many were there in the company: three, six, twelve or twenty? There is no answer. Where did they come from: India, Babylon, Persia, or Arabia? The only answer is, "They came from the East." Canon Farrar says, "There is nothing but a mass of confused and contradictory traditions to throw any light either on their rank, their country, their number, or their names." But to the questions, what led the Magi to Judea? What did they come for? What is the social significance of their visit? We have more definite data.

According to their own testimony, as recorded by Matthew they had seen the "star" of a new king in the East. In common with the expectation of the Jewish world, and perhaps much or all of the heathen world, they were expecting and looking for the coming of a new universal king. They professed to have seen a striking sidereal phenomenon, which they called "his star," or constellation as the word "astera" may be translated, and accepted it as a Divine indication that the king had come somewhere in Palestine. At any rate, it was the impelling power of their astrological observation and beliefs that led them to the capital of the Jews to inquire "where is the King of the Jews that is born?"

That the world, especially the Jews, was expecting the coming of a mighty world Conqueror soon; that it was the universal belief that astronomic bodies controlled the destiny of individuals and nations, and that sidereal phenomena indicated happenings in given localities; that a conjunction of two of the largest superior planets, Saturn and Jupiter, in Pisces, occurred about this time and produced an exceptional and striking sidereal phenomenon—and that the Magi shared in the universal belief and practice of the day, when they accepted the heavenly manifestation as "his star" and followed it in search of him whom it indicated had come, see the "Life of Christ," by Andrew, Farrar, and Edershiem.

What did they come for? They came not to worship, but to pay "homage." The original word, "proskunasai," means to pay reverence or homage by prostration, kissing of the hand, or giving gifts. Their conception of him whom they sought was not that of a God, but of a mighty king, God's anointed. In accordance with their belief they brought gifts, material gifts (Gold, Frankinsence and Myrrh), such as are usually presented to kings and young royal scions. And when they found the Christ child they opened their treasure-boxes and offered him their triple gift and did obeisance in true Oriental fashion. Having done this, their mission seems to be ended, and they are lost in the gloom of silence.

The real point in the narrative is the social significance of their visit to Jesus. According to ancient Christian tradition the number of the Magician visitors was three, named Melchior, Belthasar and Caspar. Melchior was a descendant of Shem, and a very old man with white hair and long beard. Belthasar was a descendant of Japheth, a swarthy fellow in the prime of life. Caspar was the son of Ham, and a ruddy beardless youth. Thus, according to these traditions they are made representatives of three periods in life, and the three divisions of the globe.

What matters it whether these traditions are historically true or not, they present a beautiful and true picture of the cosmopolitan and universal mission of Jesus. He came to redeem not only Palestine, Greece, Rome, Egypt, Europe and America, but the whole world. His kingdom, the social order, he came to establish and to rule over, is not local but universal. He came to "save" not only the old on the verge of eternity, but also the full grown man and the youth and the child. He appeals to the brain and sinew of humanity in its prime. His Gospel is "good-tidings" to all. His "Kingdom" carries with it "salvation" for Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, wise and unwise, big and little, young and old. The welfare of humanity (its liberty, fraternity, peace, plenty and maturity), is absolutely dependent upon the adoption of the Christ's principles in the domestic, social, educational, ecclesiastical, economic and political realms of society. This must be done if we are socially saved. And this is the conscious and deliberate aim of the "Christian Socialist Fellowship of America," and the real objective of the world-wide Socialist Political Party. We are working for the establishment of a "Universal Co-operative Commonwealth," based upon justice, in which all racial, linguistic and social distinctions shall be forever abolished. We are after the application of the "Golden Rule" to everyday life and the full realization of the Brotherhood of Man. It must come. It is the world's only hope. It is our only salvation.

Herod Mocked of the Magi

When landed in Palestine the Magi, very naturally went to the capital and asked Herod, the king, "Where is the new-born king of the Jews? for," said they, "we have seen his star in the East and are come to pay him homage." Perhaps they thought the king-to-be was Herod's son or near relative and that he would know all about him. At any rate, their question implies that they thought he, at least, knew just where he was to be found. Imagine their surprise when they discovered that he did not know even that he was born much less where he was. In his ignorance, and wild with concern, he called the heads of the church and inquired of them, "Where the Christ should be born?" Even they did not know that the new "king" had come; all they knew was what others had told them: "In Bethlehem of Judea." The Church and State ignorant of the presence and whereabouts of Him who is come to save them! How true to history. A corrupt state and a decadent church are always ignorant of their friends and saviors, when others discover them and pay them homage the best they can do is to plan for their murder.

Herod, the cruel, now became Herod the cunning. As soon as he discovered that the birthplace of the new king was Bethlehem he dismissed the church officials and secretly recalled the Magi and carefully inquired of them, "What time the Star appeared?" He desired to ascertain the exact age of the child. Then very adroitly he advised the Magi to go and search out diligently where the child was located; and when they had